TRANSCRIPT—ANITA WHITE-CARTER

Asheville African American Heritage Survey

Interviewee: Anita White-Carter

Interviewer: Rory Krupp (Owen & Eastlake Ltd.)

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Abstract: This interview for the Asheville African American Heritage Survey was conducted by Rory Krupp, principal, Owen & Eastlake Ltd. The National Park Service Historic Preservation Fund provided a grant for the project, which was administered by the City of Asheville Department of Planning and Urban Design. The goal of the AAAHS was to identify and preserve historically significant places to Asheville and Buncombe County's African American community. White-Carter discussed her memories of growing up in the Shiloh neighborhood of Asheville, its boundaries, residents, and changes to the neighborhood's demographics over time.

Note: The interview is missing the first few minutes. Interviewer states he believes this was due to operator error on his part.

Anita White-Carter: The school was the activity, was the center for most recreational activities within the segregated communities. So we participated in, you know, school

festivals. We had a lot of plays at the school, our parents participated in that. My father was a big, every year he had an annual barbecue pig picking down on the school ground so a lot of our recreational activities centered around the school ground, attending baseball games, that sort of thing.

Rory Krupp: Was the baseball game, was that at the park or was it at the school?

AWC: Down, where it is now?

RK: Yeah.

AWC: That was part of the school then. But, see, all of it became a park when the city took over the school.

RK: Oh, okay.

AWC: Back in, I think the last class graduated in ‘69.

AWC: But before that it was the school ground.

RK: Okay.

AWC: One thing my father liked to do a lot was go to the drive-in movies.

RK: Which one did you go to?

AWC: The was one down here on, geez, near the river road down there.

AWC: Okay.

AWC: Where the Nature Center is now.

RK: Yeah.

AWC: There was one down there.

RK: I was talking to someone yesterday about that, and they went to--Dreamland?

AWC: Dreamland.

RK: Okay. That's a popular spot.

AWC: Yeah, yeah. It was, it was. He piled us all up in the car and we'd go to the movies. Because he refused, he absolutely refused, to allow us to go sit in the balcony. So he would take us to the movies.

RK: To the movies, yeah.

RK: So, you did. There was none of that then, but the segregated theater, for you.

AWC: For me, the theaters were segregated and you had to sit in the balcony.

RK: (Laughter)

AWC: I would sneak in, I'd sneak in.

RK: Uh huh, but he didn't know that.

AWC: But he didn't know that. Yeah.

(Laughter)

RK: So everything was clearly segregated then, like restaurants, and…

AWC: Yeah, yeah, I think I don't remember, Asheville started to open up a little bit in the late ‘60s, early ‘70s. By that time I had left.

RK: Right. When did you leave?

AWC: Well, I went away to college in ‘69 I think. No, '65. And I never truly came back home. I mean I'd come back for summer vacations, but as soon as I graduated college I found a job. I lived in Tennessee for a year, Alabama for a year, Birmingham for a year…somewhere in Georgia--Albany, Georgia for a year. It was the nature of my job to move every year.

RK: What was your occupation?

AWC: Well, at that time I was a college counselor.

RK: Okay.

AWC: With a special program that the Southern Association had in historically Black schools. So that, they would set up, the 13th year for Black kids, and I was their counselor. So every year I would move. Then after that I went to graduate school in Pittsburgh. And in the ‘60s or early ‘70s, I guess, and I just stayed in Pittsburgh until ‘84.

RK: Ok. Did you like Pittsburgh?

AWC: Yeah, I liked Pittsburgh a lot.

RK: And then you came back.

AWC: Yeah, actually I moved back. Actually, I came back and lived in Rock Hill, South Carolina for a little while, because my mother was ill. And I needed to be close to her so I moved down here. She rallied, she was fine.I could've stayed in Pittsburgh. (Laughter)

RK: But, no you came back. (Laughter)

AWC: And so I've been here since '84.

RK: Okay. That's a good stretch.

AWC: Yeah. And I was, I was a research librarian over at UNCA. I retired in 2014.

RK: Ohhh.

AWC: I was there for almost 30 years.

RK: I'm going there tomorrow.

AWC: Are you really?

RK: Yeah. I've been there a bunch of times already, so.

AWC: Are you going up in Special Collections?

RK: Yup.

AWC: Oh okay! You'll like it up there.

RK: It's nice.

AWC: The staff there is nice.

RK: They are really nice. Yeah, I've been there a couple times already. They keep those boxes coming.

AWC: Yeah, keep those boxes coming, and keep your gloves on. (Laughter)

RK: I keep, I always--I'm a researcher, I don't want to get in trouble (laughter), you know.

AWC: Yeah, yeah. So I was over there for 30 years, almost 30.

RK: Uh huh. So, there's been no urban renewal in Shiloh.

AWC: No.

RK: But the highway did come through

AWC: Yeah. I actually brought a map.

RK: Ok, good.

AWC: ( ) This is urban renewal, but we didn't live, we kinda suffered a little back. I've been doing some slide shows on my neighborhood. This is--okay. I don't know when this was printed. But originally, Shiloh was this core--when I say originally I'm talking 1889.

RK: Right. When they moved it.

AWC: When they moved it, yeah. So Shiloh was this core area right here, plus, this little area over here. And this is Brooklyn Road, and Brooklyn Road was like a main road in the neighborhood. So Brooklyn Road crossed right up into here where you don't see anything, and there were a lot of families up there. Some of my relatives lived right there.

Right over in this area. And then when the highway came through, I'm not sure when that was, was it the late ‘50s, early ‘60s...

RK: I think so, yeah

AWC: I've got to figure that out, but yes, there’s history of I-40... Anyway, so when the highway came through here, it basically made it, it knocked out this very small part. But it knocked out that little part of the neighborhood. It went kind of like that. And, so, the family members that lived, it did create a problem, because the family members that lived there, now, in order to get there, because you couldn't go across the highway. You could, we did…

RK: Yeah, still…

AWC: In order to get over there, to relatives, you had to go down to Biltmore, to London Road, to right here on the edge, go up there and take a little road up into the... Whereas before we run right across--

RK: Right, just go across.

AWC: --to Uncle Bob’s.

RK: Okay, I'm going to skate down to thin ice here. Is Brooklyn a different neighborhood than Shiloh?

AWC: Ahh, it was originally, but not now, it's just considered Brooklyn.

AWC: Okay.

AWC: Because, this, you see, Brooklyn, what happened was the highway cut Brooklyn off.

RK: Right, because it was up here, right.

AWC: It was up here.

RK: Because the Brooklyn Road comes parallel to 40.

AWC: Yeah, yeah. And so we always considered, a lot of the people newer to the neighborhood moved into Brooklyn.

RK: Ok. Got it. Alright. (Pause) And then it expanded.

AWC: Yeah...

RK: So was Rock Hill a different neighborhood, too?

AWC: Yeah. Well it was back in the day, but now it’s...

RK: It's all together?

AWC: It's all considered one neighborhood... (Phone rings). I'm sorry, I meant to cut this off.

RK: That's ok

AWC: Can I take this, do you mind?

RK: Sure, no, go ahead. I’ll take some notes.

(Pause)

RK: What's that little church on Brooklyn Road?

AWC: It's called... I'll tell you--

RK: I went past and was like, that's cute.

AWC: It's the Fire Baptized...I may not have put that in my ( ). But I think it's the Fire Baptized, it's something new, I mean it's not new, it's just recently added to the-- Fire Baptized...

RK: It's....it's an M isn't it?

AWC: Missionary Holiness Church

RK: Is it new?

AWC: Oh...heck no.

RK: I mean, is the congregation new? No…

AWC: No, actually that church was a built in 1912. It's exactly as it was, except they've added bathrooms, and it was deeded. If you, if you see the little church you'll notice that there's, it just that it's on its own little property

RK: Right, I noticed...there's a--

AWC: And there's actually no address for it

RK: Oh really?

AWC: Yeah, and it was deeded to the congregation by one of my relatives. With the provision that it always be a church. So they can't sell it.

RK: Oh, so it's like...it's a church.

AWC: They meet there every Sunday.

RK: Okay. It's not very big.

AWC: No, it's a tiny little place. And they have a very faithful congregation. And it's been going on since 1912.

RK: Wow, that's impressive. There are other churches there, right?

AWC: In Shiloh?

RK: Yeah.

AWC: Yeah, actually, there's the... This is, this was, this was one of the original churches that was moved. I think they moved it in parts, I don't know. Anyways it was rebuilt from the Biltmore Estate.

RK: Oh right.

AWC: In 1889. And it's a...

RK: But it's gone, right?

AWC: That church, it was rebuilt in 1925...

RK: Oh, okay, so it's still--

AWC: And this sits down there now.

RK: So it's still there.

RK: Okay. Now, that's where the cemetery is at too, right?

AWC: Yeah, that...

RK: That they moved?

AWC: Yeah, the cemetery is right beside that. And the other church that was, well, it was in Rock Hill. And it existed before the folk moved into Shiloh. But it was in Rock Hill. And it's, it was rebuilt a couple of times. So here it is. And we consider this a part of Shiloh.

RK: Ok. So that's it. Are there any commercial buildings in Shiloh?

AWC: Hopefully not.

RK: (Laughter) Are there any old ones?

AWC: There, okay. There's...not in existence. Not in the core of Shiloh area, I mean. There's all this stuff around the perimeter. But not in the core, it, there's one building for some of the little family grocery stores--

RK: Ok, that's what I'm looking for

AWC: --groceries is still there.

RK: Oh good.

AWC: It's at the corner of, and...it won't be there long because it's up for sale.

RK: Uh-oh.

AWC: It's at the corner of Lexington, I can almost see I, you can almost see it.

RK: Yes.

AWC: Ah, this is Hendersonville Road. At the WilcoHess, you turn on to Brooklyn, I mean you turn onto West Chapel.

RK: Ok, I know where that's at.

AWC: It's that first stop sign. There's that building over there, it's kind of boarded up. That was Rogers Grocery Store. Rogers were, that was a white family. And I don't know when they came into being, but it was probably in the late ‘40s. But I don't know that. The other family grocery stores have been torn down.

RK: Have they? Ok. But there's nowhere there like...

AWC: There was a cleaning, Denison's Cleaners, but it's gone. Oh! Yeah. There was Young's Nursing Home. Young's Nursing Home, I don't remember when it came into being. I brought the wrong file for it. But anyway, Young's Nursing Home was there. (Papers shuffling.) Young's Nursing Home was one of the first African American Nursing Homes, for, run and owned by African Americans. And they were...okay, I don't have a picture it, here it is, actually. (Papers shuffling.) Does it say when it was? No, it--this picture was taken in 1960, I think. And that was Young's Nursing Home. And it had been there a while

RK: But it's not there anymore.

AWC: Yes, it is.

RK: Oh, it is there? Good.

AWC: In fact, we're erecting a historic marker for that. It's on Caribou Road. I don't...you wouldn't find it under Young's Nursing Home. Right now I think it's some kind of hostel where kids--.

RK: Yeah.

AWC: Okay, if you go down Caribou Road, depending on which was you're going, you'll see some new homes that I think Habitat [for Humanity] put up, some new homes--.

RK: Okay, I can recognize those.

AWC: You'll recognize those.

AWC: It's a brick building across from there. And you may see some kids hanging out in, a whole bunch of high school and college kids, medical group. It's sunny now so they're out in the hammocks. (Laughter)

RK: They're out there, doing kid things.

AWC: Doing kid things, yes.

RK: Alright. It's a good one. Yeah, ‘cause we're going to look at commercial and institutional buildings, in our survey. So we're going to do all the neighborhoods and were going to try and find every one that we can.

AWC: Yeah, I don't know, I mean...I'm not really, I'm not real good at remembering what the commercial, exact commercial things were. Because in the past 10 years we've been working very, very hard to keep commercial buildings out.

RK: Yeah, because you're getting like--.

AWC: Yes, in fact the Shiloh Community Association worked with the city to do what they call the 2020 Plan. And in the-20-20 Plan—no, the 20-25 Plan. The city using it as a planning document. And commercial, there are real strict regulations for zoning for commercial purposes. So right now--

RK: So it's working so far?

AWC: It's working so far. Every now and then something comes--

RK: There's always something.

AWC: Well, one thing that when someone wants to develop, do some sort of development, they have to meet with the community association.

RK: Oh good.

AWC: And after they meet with us they aren't very happy. I mean, they--

(Laughter)

AWC: One group came, they wanted to put up like a massage parlor up off, I don't know if it was a massage group...up, actually it was in Rock Hill. But you know, they had to get approval to rezone it. Which meant they had to go before City Council.

RK: Right.

AWC: And we said we will meet you there.

RK: We'll see you there! (Laughter)

AWC: They withdrew.

RK: So it works.

AWC: And it's every day, every day. What we haven't been able to keep out, and I guess that's not the purpose of the plan, is housing development. You know, in Asheville, you find a little square inch of ground someone's going to try and build on it.

RK: Build something on it.

AWC: But one thing the plan does, it defines how those buildings should be. Although--

RK: Does it work?

AWC: … It doesn't work that well. Habitat does the best job of putting up buildings. Originally we wanted A frames in the street. Habitat is really good. But somehow they've gotten to a point where they've put up these little, I call them bird coops, chicken coops...

RK: I've seen those.

AWC: They put those up. Then they'll put a street in there. And they'll all face the street.

RK: Right.

AWC: So, that's something we can't avoid. We have eliminated, one guy wanted to put—he had houses that had garages and apartments on top. He wanted to make the bottom a garage apartment. But, it was just too congested. He wasn't keeping up the property, he wasn't, so--the association was able to stifle that. So we work hard. This is, if you want to know, you can have that.

RK: I can take a photo of it.

AWC: Okay, take a photo of it.

RK: I'll do that, I brought a camera for such occasions.

AWC: That's the information about the 20-25 Plan.

RK: So were there new housing developments like in the ‘50s and ‘60s in Shiloh, or did it kind of stop? Or it's always been growing?

AWC: It's always been growing. But, there were a couple. Now, remember when they first moved out to Shiloh there were four streets.

RK: Ok, so what was that?

AWC: When they first moved out in Shiloh, people lived on Brooklyn Road, White Avenue, a road called Logan Road, but it eventually became West Chapel. It was named after the Black guy that helped people move out there, Reverend Billy Logan. And then, but over time the High Meadows area. I have no idea when it came into being, but my brother bought a house out in that area when I was in college, so it would've been in the ‘70s,

RK: Ok, yeah. And it's those big ranch ones, right?

AWC: They're not big.

RK: Well they're ranch houses though, right?

AWC: Yeah, they're ranches. (Laughter)

AWC: And then there was another area that started to be developed, and I don't know when. Again, I'm thinking ‘50s, ‘60s.

RK: Yeah.

AWC: If I can remember when it was done it was after 1950.

RK: Okay. (Laughter)

AWC: But anyway, that was over in Jefferson, on Jefferson Avenue. Now it's called Roosevelt Park.

RK: Okay. (Pause.) It was like an African American suburb? Kind of, or development...?

AWC: It was very, it was a few streets they just put up houses. We're talking small, we're not talking about a suburban home.

RK: Right, just small.

AWC: Just two streets with, what at the time, were nice little houses. I'm talking about little houses.

RK: Right, yeah.

AWC: And that's about it. The other development was down London Road, but it was mostly white. So, yeah.

RK: Ok, yeah. So when did it start to integrate? Or did it? Shiloh.

AWC: Shiloh? It just, sort of, started creeping. I would say after the ‘80s. It's real funny. When Shiloh first developed, all the Black folks lived right in here, right up in here. And then, on the perimeter, like here and on London Road, over on Forest Street, which is Ardmore, these were white neighborhoods.

RK: Okay.

AWC: And then now, I don't know when the--I don't know--it just eased in. Eventually, a few different white families would move in, or maybe a mixed couple would move in, and so now it's very diverse.

RK: Yeah, that's what I thought it was.

AWC: Not only with--

RK: Is that a problem?

AWC: No, no.

RK: Has it been, or no?

AWC: Well, see, it's edging towards gentrification.

RK: Yeah.

AWC: See that's, that's the problem. There's no problem in terms of welcoming other people in. But, people who come in and build bigger houses with more money, that causes issues with the local people. And then, as the older people, when the people first moved into Shiloh they had large tracts of land, I mean, I live on White Avenue, my uncle owned that whole tract. And he built a house for his sister, for his brother. And it was called White Avenue. But, you know, as the older members die out the kids sell the property, the property gets transferred from one group to another. Like, on my street, on White Avenue, when I grew up. everyone on White Avenue was related. Aunt Catherine, Uncle Bobby. It was almost like a compound.

RK: Right.

AWC: And let's see. In Catherine's house is a white owner. Two houses down there's a white owner. Up the street across from where Uncle Robert used to live, I think they're Hispanic, I'm not sure. Two more houses up, you know...

RK: Yeah, it's just, yeah.

AWC: And that took place over, say. I mean, you know when you think about it. I think about the '70s as not long ago. But that was a long time ago.

RK: Yeah, I know. Because I was like, in school in the '70s.

AWC: Yeah. Yeah, so that was a long time ago. So over those many years--

RK: It just gradually--

AWC: It just gradually changed--

RK: Yeah, house by house.

AWC: And then, recently, and when I say recently I'm saying within the past 10 or 15 years, a new development came out called Appeldoorn. It's really nice townhouses, it's on Brooklyn Road, what used to be one of the main thoroughfares. It's on Brooklyn Road. That might be it right there. What is that? No. What is this stuff? I don't know what this is. Maybe that's it. I don't know. But anyway it's on Brooklyn Road. I don't know, conditional--

RK: Conditional uses, yeah... I don't know. That's a new one. So Brooklyn was always the main, like, street though.

AWC: Well actually, Shiloh Road was the main street. But Brooklyn was, I guess, the next main street.

RK: What do most people do, for a living, in Shiloh?

AWC: Well.

RK: Or was it all different?

AWC: Well, no. A lot of them worked, a lot of the men, worked on the Biltmore Estate. Because I think some of them had probably been working on--no, well, when they moved them over, a lot of the men had been working on the Biltmore Estate, in the, on the grounds crew. And I've heard Darin Waters say, I don't know how true it is, because I haven't been in the archives, but he said that it was one of the first integrated work crews. And that he had seen letters where Vanderbilt was actually threatened for having integrated work crews. This was back, I don't know when this was, but this was back in

the early 1900s. And then a lot of folk, a lot of the women, were domestic workers over in the Biltmore Forest. And also because it was a fairly nice neighborhood it was a very mixed, educationally mixed neighborhood. The ministers, the teachers, ( ) we had one of the most prominent doctors lived in the neighborhood.

RK: Who was that?

RK: Not doctors, dentist.

RK: Was it Roberts, Hendrick?

AWC: No, none of them. Butler.

RK: Okay, got it.

AWC: Butler, he had a real nice house out there. But anyway it was like the place, a place for Black professionals to live because they couldn't live in the white suburbs.

RK: Right. Yeah, so they lived out there.

AWC: They lived out there. Yeah, yeah, that was--.

RK: Okay. (Pause) Did people, were they involved in like, Civil Rights things or... not so much.

AWC: Ah, not so much. Are you talking about the Civil Rights era with the protests and all of that?

RK: Yeah, maybe. Or actually, at any time.

AWC: Well there was a group in the neighborhood called the Community League, and it was like a community association. And that group lobbied for things like paved roads, street lights, so you know, with the city.

RK: Yeah, services.

AWC: So they were eventually successful but it took a while. A lot of the kids who grew up in that neighborhood, by the time Civil Rights era was, came into being, they were away in college. And they participated, a lot of them participated. I actually went to Greensboro to participate. You know. At that time that when, you know, Greensboro was really heating up.

RK: Yeah, when things were really happening.

AWC: And I have friends who, because a lot of the kids did go away to college. Education was strongly encouraged in the neighborhood

RK: Right, that's what I'm starting to see is--.

AWC: With the generation that was before me, and my generation, I'm not so sure I can get that feeling back anymore.

RK: You don't think it's there anymore?

AWC: Yeah, I think it is, but it's not like it was.

RK: So were people encouraged to leave?

AWC: Encouraged to leave?

RK: Yeah.

AWC: Yes.

RK: Because that's what I'm starting to see is--.

AWC: Yeah, yeah, if you wanted to do anything with your life, if you wanted a decent job. First of all, as Black kids, we were always told, “You gotta be twice as good to do half as well.” So, we were encouraged to move and look for something else. We have, in my family--I come from a huge family--in my family we had the Black migration. There was a trail, they left Asheville, Shiloh, went to Washington state, my cousin had a huge house, stayed there, and stopped over there and then they went to Detroit, Philadelphia, New York, and, it was just a trail.

RK: So it was kinda like, sort of like, Great Migration city when everybody went. Like if you lived in Asheville, oh, we're going to, moving to Cleveland or something like that.

AWC: No, no, no. A lot of them went to Washington and Philadelphia. Because you know, you move, and you know somebody.

RK: Right.

AWC: Like a lot of people knew Juanita in Philadelphia. They knew they could have a place to live and work until they got something going. And then from there they would move to Philadelphia and there, in Philadelphia there's a large part of my family. And I think other families, I don't know about other families. But that was kind of a pattern.

RK: Okay.

AWC: So I would see it would probably be ( )

RK: Right that would be, yeah. Okay. That's good to know. And then do people come back then, to retire?

AWC: Isn't that strange? I did.

RK: I mean, it's not strange, but it's--.

AWC: A lot of people come back. Well, I don't know if a lot of people come back, but I know a lot of people who come back. And sometimes they come back because they may have property here, from family property. I came back because well, my mother was ill. And then I had this unrealistic glorified image of how nice my growing up was. Because I grew up in a very tight community. It was a village. We really were a village.

RK: Yeah.

AWC: And when you're in an area like that, you're sort of, sheltered. Sort of, and I didn't see how evil this world was, and I wanted my son to grow up like that. With his grandmother, his aunts, and his uncles, all of them in walking distance. And it was okay, he's almost 40 now so, but he would never come back. He would never come back.

RK: He's just like, no. Yeah. So he grew up here then?

AWC: He grew up here.

RK: Yeah. Ok, where does he live now?

AWC: Ah, Long Beach, California.

RK: My wife was born there.

AWC: Really? I love Long Beach.

RK: Yeah. (Laughter) That's interesting.

AWC: So, do you think you were protected from segregation and things like that?

AWC: I don't know what your--I wasn't really, well, I don't know. I think when you operate with it, I mean I had people, I was literally kicked off the bus one time. I mean, you know.

RK: Oh no (laughter), you weren't--

AWC: I wasn't. I mean literally. I was like 4 or 5 maybe 6.

RK: What could you have done?

AWC: I went to the parade, my brothers, for the first time my parents let my older brothers take me to the Christmas parade. And we had buses that came through, and I got on the bus, I was just a little kid. I sat down beside this white guy and kicked me into the aisle. I'll never forget it. But he made a mistake. Because on the bus were a lot of teenage Black boys. And they went after him. And the bus driver quit. He parked the bus and said, "Everybody off, everybody off! I'm calling the police!" So the boys had to, we had to walk, it was just right down here in Biltmore, which is not far. It was about 5 or 6 miles from our house. So we all had to walk on home, which wasn't bad. But it was really scary because that night the police a lot around the neighborhood looking for them, kids, because nobody knew anything.

RK: Right. Ew. How were police relations back then?

AWC: As far as I can tell, not good.

RK: That's what I hear, yeah.

AWC: Yeah. Not good.

RK: Yeah. Okay, that confirms everything I heard. Yeah. So, when they moved it, did they, how many people moved, you know? Like way back, let's get to some serious history here. (Laughter)

AWC: I started not to bring this book but I'm glad I did.

RK: I'm glad you did.

AWC: These are land purchases and sales. So I don't know how many people moved. I'm thinking not a whole bunch, because I don't know. I have the number of families but I don't have how many kids they had and stuff like that. So, I don't know. I have no idea. But it was like, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13…14, 15, looks like maybe 20, 25 families.

RK: That's a good size.

AWC: And remember they all had children.

RK: Right. That's quite a few people, quite a few families.

AWC: Well, no, actually, that was the number in the original places. This is what the--these are the families that moved in 1889.

RK: Okay.

AWC: I don't know.

RK: Was your family one of them?

AWC: Yeah. Looks like...

RK: So does everybody know who the original families were, and stuff?

AWC: Well, no, well not the original names. Not the original. If you look at this, though, yeah. This is a summary. These are, these are probably some of the families. This is a summary of what they, prices paid by Shiloh landowners like in the, after the Civil War. So these were the people who were in the original Shiloh group. And, I don't know. Yeah, I recognize a lot of these names.

RK: So nobody lived there before, right?

AWC: Lived where? In new Shiloh?

RK: In new Shiloh...

AWC: No, it was just land.

RK: Farm land or whatever, yeah.

AWC: But the people who lived in Rock Hill were already over there. Black people were in Rock Hill.

RK: Ah okay, so they were...

AWC: Yeah, there was a neighborhood...a little community there.

RK: And then people just continued to work on Biltmore then.

AWC: Yeah.

RK: Yeah, because it's right there.

AWC: Yeah, yeah.

RK: So do people know where Old Shiloh was at, on Biltmore?

AWC: Yep, actually do, it was right, there's Browntown Road that goes off Rock, goes off of Hendersonville Road, and goes up that way. And this is, I've actually been to the area. If you go over to Biltmore Estate. They have what they call the Legacy Tour. And it takes you around and shows you where Old Shiloh was.

RK: Oh nice.

AWC: So this is, this is the site of a picture I took while I was over there. It's called the Legacy Tour. I don't know how good it is anymore, but the archivist over there was great when I was--.

RK: Yeah, I think he's on top of it.

AWC: Yeah, he was really on top of it. But I think he retired.

RK: Ok. What was his name, was it Bill?

AWC: Bill Alexander. And then, over there they have a marker of it shows where Old Shiloh was.

RK: Well, how long were people there?

AWC: Well, story is.. .I don't know real names, but the story is that there were, there was a family over there of brothers. And I actually have a letter from one of the late, late family members who had some slaves. And after the Civil War, they had to, they freed the slaves. But the mother of the house set aside some property for them to stay there. So they were there, and I don't know this was maybe 12 families, I mean 12 people, very small, maybe 12 people. So in 1865 they settled there. But, so they were there from 1865 to 1889. And then it grew, I mean the community grew during that time because here was a place where freedmen could come and live.

RK: Do they have any buildings besides the church? Or just the..

AWC: You mean in Old Shiloh?

RK: Yeah.

AWC: All I know is the church, because that was the school.

RK: Oh, it was all the same thing then.

AWC: Yeah, it served as the school.

RK: And they moved it. So they used it as a school before the Rosenwald School?

AWC: Yeah.

RK: Okay.

AWC: It was--I have an aunt who is 101. And still sharp as a tack. She remembers going to that church school before the Rosenwald School. She's 101. So there was, I don't have documents. Before I say stuff I really like to have it documented. But my understanding is that the kids went to school in the little church. Then they built a one-room school in, I don't know if the county built it or whatever, but anyway there was a one-room school in the area where the Rosenwald school eventually became. And it was burned. It burned down.

RK: Yeah.

AWC: You know. But it was a terrible little school. And it was a one-room school.

RK: It was just like--yeah.

AWC: And then after that, the people in the neighborhood really petitioned. You know they'd go up and beg is what it was, for a new school. And that, so that's how, they got the Rosenwald School. Because the County Board of Education had to approve the building of a Rosenwald School, even though the people had to match the Rosenwald funds.

RK: That's right, because you had to match everything.

AWC: You had to match it.

RK: Right

AWC: So, you know. They eventually, in 1927 got approval for the Rosenwald School. And an African American man who lived in the neighborhood, who was a builder, actually built it, supervised the building of it.

RK: Right. Wow. But it's gone, right?

AWC: The building, the original Rosenwald building is gone, but in 1952, see this is the original Rosenwald building. And this is on the front.

RK: Is it wood?

AWC: It was brick. I went to school in that building. It was really nice, the floors were really super clean.

RK: It's a nice-looking building.

AWC: It was one of the, because this one was built in ‘27, and the Rosenwald program ended in, I think, around 1935. Or in the mid ‘30s.

RK: Yeah, the schools.

AWC: So, this was one of the later ones and it was larger than...because some of those schools are like one room.

RK: Little.

AWC: So, it was, and I think a lot depended on how much money you could raise.

RK: Well the community must've turned out for this.

AWC: Well, I'm sure the county put some money into it, too.

RK: Yeah.

AWC: Well, the actual cost of, I had it on here, the cost--well, I forgot, but Rosenwald contributed a very small amount, but the public money was almost triple. And then on the back of the school they put this building right here, in 1952, and that was the County Board of Education expanded.

RK: And that's still there?

AWC: This is still there. But this part is now a gym. I wasn't here when they tore that down. I just, I don't know. Now a lot of people are getting them restored.

RK: Yeah, it's a big thing now. A lot of people are keeping them, yeah.

AWC: And it was really a decent building. I read some article where people were complaining because in some cases it was better than some of the other schools.

RK: Right. (Laughter)

AWC: And the only reason they wouldn't let, they wouldn't integrate that school into the system is because they didn't want the kids, the white kids, to come into the neighborhood.

RK: It was like, forget it. Yeah. That's interesting.

AWC: This is what it is now.

RK: So, are there parks in Shiloh? I read about a park the other day. It was like on Brooklyn and Shiloh Road. Do they come together?

AWC: Yeah, that's Shiloh Park, Shiloh School Park. That’s, this is the community center. The Linwood Crump Community Center.

RK: Okay.

AWC: And it's the park down there.

RK: So the community center is the old park?

AWC: Community center is where the old school was.

RK: Okay. I got it.

AWC: And the, yeah. Oh, here's that little fire church.

RK: That's it. That's the one.

(Laughter.)

RK: Ok, so the community center was where the school was at?

AWC: Yes. Here is the--right outside the community center there is a park. It's called Shiloh Park.

RK: Shiloh Park. Okay, because I was reading about the baseball field.

AWC: Yes, it’s at the Shiloh Park

RK: Is it, was it a WPA project?

AWC: No, I don't think so.

AWC: You mean the Workers Pro--

RK: Yeah.

AWC: That was what, in the ‘40s?

RK: ‘30s

RK: ‘30s. Early ‘30s, or like late ‘30s. ‘38 or so--

AWC: No, I don't think so. Because, ah, the school would just have been being cleaned up and gotten ready. Because school didn't start until 1927.

RK: All right.

AWC: So, as I remember it was just a big park, a big area. You know. And it became--

RK: Ah, so there was no baseball field back then?

AWC: No, it didn't become a baseball... well, it was but it was like a handmade baseball field because we had little baseball teams. In the community, community league had a little baseball team. But it was just like, the men got up there and made a baseball field. It didn't become a real park until the county, I mean the City Parks and Recreation took over.

RK: Oh, when did they do that?

AWC: I'm gonna say 1979.

RK: Ok, oh, so it was before--.

AWC: In the ‘70s.

RK: So it was an informal park, then?

AWC: It was just an informal park, yeah.

RK: Okay, alright. Are there buildings up--

AWC: But I don't know when they made it an official baseball park. But everything changed after City Parks and Recreation took over. Because the school set there vacant for, I don't know, 8 or 9 years. A long time

RK: Oh really?

AWC: Yeah. They graduated their last class in ‘69. And I think they kept a couple other little classes there, like, but they, it wasn't, but anyway in ’69. And the building was demolished in 1979.

RK: So it was around for, yeah.

AWC: It was around for a while.

RK: So kids went to the new school there. Or where'd they go to school at?

AWC: Well, they were broken up. Depended on which side of which street you lived.

RK: Oh really, yeah?

AWC: Some of them got to Robinson District. Well, some of them might have gone to Biltmore School, on Biltmore Avenue. I don't really know. But now they go, I have that somewhere written down. But anyway, they dispersed to the Robinson District and the Reynolds District.

RK: Okay, how did that go over in the community?

AWC: Huh?

RK: How did that go over in the community?

AWC: Oh, people were very upset.

RK: I mean that's just like, wait, you're breaking up our schools.

AWC: Yeah, yeah, they really didn't want to see the school closed

RK: Yeah.

AWC: It's always a balance. I mean, it was a good little school. We had teachers that lived in the neighborhood. A lot of teachers had their master's degrees. Because in the summer all you could do was go to school. And, the teachers either lived, the principal lived next door to me. His wife taught me to read before I went to school. And, next door to him was the lunch room lady. The--

RK: --the cafeteria lady.

AWC: --the cafeteria lady. And then down the street from them, that side, was one of the teachers who was also the church organist. So it was a real kind of tight--

RK: Right, right

AWC: And the parents were pleased with the type of education their children got. You could walk to school. So it was kind of a two-edged sword, I mean, the thinking is if you go to the white schools, you'll have more resources. Because we would get used books.

RK: Right

AWC: You'd have more resources. Greater opportunities. So, and the whole idea that you couldn’t go, so it was--so it was a mixed feeling. But on the other hand, you lost something when you did that. You know, when we were coming up, in our little school we had the opportunity to be leaders. To do performances, we did oh, we did so many performances. They had the opportunity to stand before a group and learn how to speak. But then when the kids got, initially, when they were in the white schools they were kind of shuttered to the back. So we had the opportunity to stand out, and a lot of them were afraid. And a lot of them, quite frankly, were not treated, I'm sorry, but--

RK: No, it's fine.

AWC: Not treated, they were either treated poorly or they were treated so bad they were, they weren't expected to do anything. And I know my mama would get so mad. And if you don't expect her to do anything, she won't do anything.

RK: Right. Yeah. And at the other school you were expected to do stuff.

AWC: I was expected to do stuff.

RK: Yeah, right, I mean those teachers, like--.

AWC: So it was sort of a two-edged sword. So the first few years I think, you know, I just think the kids got shafted Truly, truly shafted. After that, things kind of improved.

RK: Settled down a little. When did it integrate?

AWC: Well, it must've been in the, I'm not real sure of the dates. But it must've been. Like, well our school closed in ‘69.

RK: Right, so.

AWC: So we had to go somewhere.

RK: So that was it. Yeah.

AWC: But I think, yeah I think. I don't think in Asheville there was, ‘today we’re segregated and tomorrow we're integrated.’

RK: Yeah, but was it just kind of slow.

AWC: It was slow, it was very slow. And some kids would be the first to go to the Biltmore School, some kids would be the first to go here. It was sort of--

RK: Okay, I didn't realize that.

AWC: Yeah, it didn't just say today everybody goes--

RK: Okay, because some places were like that, you're going to different school tomorrow.

AWC: Yeah.

RK: Did you have Black teachers then, were there Black teachers in the integrated school?

AWC: Well, I never went to an integrated school. Yeah, some of the, there were Black teachers in some of the integrated schools, but not a lot.

RK: Okay. Because people would lose their jobs then.

AWC: Because I know some of the teachers that I know now who are retired taught in integrated schools. Yeah, there weren't a lot.

RK: Yeah, I can imagine that. Yeah. Alright, anything else I should know about Shiloh?

AWC: That's it. I love my little community.

RK: It's quite nice.

(Laughter.)

RK: When I drove around it, it's cute.

AWC: Let’s see, what else. No, but there's a lot to know about Shiloh. I mentioned the community league which was one of the early, it started in the late ‘40s, it was one of the early community associations. They lobbied for streets and everything. But they also had a little piece of property, they bought this piece of property, down here, at the corner of Hampton and Century Boulevard.

RK: What did they do with it?

AWC: Well, it was a, they built a little concession stand.

RK: Is it still there?

AWC: No, the concession stand was burned, burned and--

RK: Did it catch on fire or did it burn?

AWC: I think, fireworks...

RK: Something like that.

AWC: Yeah, I don't think it was intentional.

AWC: But the last, my father was one of the original charter members of the community league and he had these young guys that would come in, and the last--and there were women, too, a couple of women, very strong women--the last remaining--. Oh, and the 1950s, I can't remember when, I think it was ‘52, ‘59, ‘52 or ‘59, they bought this piece of property from this family, it was heir property. They bought it for, 10 dollars and considerations. That's what the deed said, I don't know what that was. So they bought that little piece of property and they put a little concession stand on it, it was where you went and 4th of July and then had your little picnics and stuff.

RK: So it was a little park, kind of?

AWC: Yeah it was kind of like a little park. And then in 2014, the last remaining trustees, see it was held, that little property was held in a trust ( ) but the last remaining one donated that piece of property to the current Shiloh Community Association. So now it's a community garden. It's kind of an eco-garden. They have students from UNCA and schools around come up and give kids classes, and they come, and there's a stream that runs back through there. And if you're riding around there it’s the corner of Hampton. It's behind the ballpark. It's right across from the ballpark.

RK: Got it. I'm gonna tour that. It's got some history to it.

AWC: Yeah, yeah it does. I actually have the deed to when the community bought it. But anyway, yeah that's a little area. So, we're struggling now with the area, I don't know, if you go by there you might see kids hanging out, you know.

RK: Up to no good, or? (Laughter)

AWC: I don't know, they don't look like they're up to any good to me, they just hang out there. I don't like them hanging out there, because they have some Little Free Libraries down there. And a mother doesn't want to bring her kid up the little library with kids hanging around, drinking, if they're drinking beer. I don't know.

RK: Right, doing whatever they're doing.

AWC: Doing whatever they're doing

RK: Teenage kid stuff.

AWC: Teenage kid stuff. I mean, they're usually not that bad but you know.

RK: I know.

AWC: You know what I mean?

RK: Yeah.

AWC: And that's my Shiloh.

RK: Well, that's exciting. So that’s quite a bit. So, that's good. (Pause.) Okay. Let's see if I have any other questions. The park, the communities, yeah those are my big ones. Are there any other buildings or things I should know about? That are in danger, or--?

AWC: No, not that I know of. Not in danger, you know.

RK: Right, or important to the community? That I might miss?

AWC: No, not really. Not that still exists. See that's it, they don't exist any more.

RK: Right, yeah.

AWC: I just think, I'm glad the nursing home is still there.

RK: Yeah, that is exciting.

AWC: How long it'll be there.

RK: A lot for sale, yeah, but nonetheless. That's what it seems like, yeah. So. Well, that's pretty exciting. My project goes up to '75, so--

AWC: Which one, the--?

RK: My project, so if they're say, '60s or '70s, that counts, too.

AWC: I don't know if it was exactly the homes, no, no...

RK: Where's it at?

AWC: It's up (laughter) I don't know, I can't tell you. It's up in Rock Hill, it's up over near where the dry cleaners used to be. But I'm pretty sure, let's see. The woman who runs it is my age. She didn't start running it until after—see I think it was after the '70s.

RK: Ok, alright. I'll figure that out, if it pops up again I'll know.

AWC: Ok now, where am I going to read this report?

RK: Well, the city says they're going to put it on their website. And I'll send you a copy, too.

AWC: No, if they put it on the website I'll see it. So I'll know it's up there.

RK: Yeah, so they're going to do that. And there's going to be a presentation, like probably in August or September that I'll do. So, it probably won't be a big surprise to anybody that actually lives in the community, but, you know. It's like, what we figured out. So, we're trying to get them to really stop, you know, quit tearing things down.

AWC: And this is primarily an architectural type survey, so you're looking at buildings, and--?

RK: Yeah, we're doing buildings. We're doing like, just for the buildings though, like parks, swimming pools--

AWC: So you've got the Walton Street--

RK: Yeah, we've got the Walton Pool. Yeah I just called them today and said "don't do anything to that." Because, you know, it's kind of in limbo I think or something.

AWC: Oh yeah. there's been a lot of mess going on.

RK: Well, I kept the mess going, so. (Laughter)

RK: Because I think that was made by the WPA, too.

AWC: Oh it may have been, now that may have been.

RK: Because I found an article about it, and the park, and the pool, it's a WPA project.

AWC: I spent a lot of time over there.

RK. Yeah, and I'm like, you cannot tear that down, because it's like, whoa. So, yeah. So would you go there, then?

AWC: Oh yeah, I went there.

RK: Was that building next to it, was it just for the pool, or it was like a recreation center?

AWC: I don't remember. Has anyone mentioned to you about the Pearson Fair?

RK: Yes, yup. Over on Burton Street. Is any of that still left?

AWC: No, actually it--.

RK: It was kind of temporary at the time.

AWC: The area where they had the fair is now, I think, part of Burton Street, down below the Burton Street, down below the Burton Street Recreation Center.

RK: Right, the school.

AWC: I don't know, it seems to me...because he died like, Pearson died in like ‘40, ‘45, ‘46. I didn't really know him, even though--I didn't know him but he was married to mother's older sister. So I didn't really know him, but his son tried to keep the fair going a little bit later. And they had that...had anyone talked to you, because they tore it down. The Pearson store?

RK: Yes

AWC: They tore it down.

RK: Yes, why did they--?

AWC: This one woman said she went to work one morning, came home, and then it was gone.

RK: I mean, that wasn't that long ago either.

AWC: No, it wasn't that long ago

RK: A couple, yeah, within 10.

AWC: I spent many hours in that store.

RK: Yeah it was a cute building, too.

AWC: Yeah, yeah they lived upstairs and--. But anyway, the Pearsons, the people over in Burton Street know that area better than I do.

RK: Nonetheless, yeah. Every little bit helps, so, I'll talk to them, too.

AWC: They put a lot of that in the Pack Library, a lot of the E.W. Pearson stuff is up there.

RK: I'll look at that, yeah, I go there quite a bit, too. (Pause.) So did you go to other, did you go to like, East End and stuff a lot...no?

AWC: Buses didn't run that way, and we didn't have cars. See, that was another thing that kept you in the neighborhood, if you couldn't walk--

RK: You could only as far as you could walk, right?

AWC: Yeah. You didn't have, I'm older than--I'm aging myself, but I left the neighborhood in the ‘60s. I was talking to my aunt, and I asked her how she got around, because there were other Black neighborhoods, and she said, "Well, sometimes we went on horse." And I said, "Oh, really?" and she got to talking about these guys she knew, and she was talking about one guy, and she said "and he had a really sharp horse."

RK: Oh really? (Laughter.) Like, okay, that counts. Yeah, that's good. Alright, I don't want to hold you up all day. So, but thanks a lot for your time.

AWC: Well, it's always fun to--.

END OF INTERVIEW.